Activity 3.2 Ecosystem Services

Learning Goal: Participants are able to identify the ecosystem services; understand the concept of use and non-use value; are critical towards monetary evaluation methods

Format: Group work

Materials: Selected pictures, papers, pens

Estimated time: 1h 30mins

Level: 1

Description: Participants are divided into groups of 4 people. Every two groups are assigned to a different picture representing one ecosystem. Alternatively, participants could be gathered somewhere outside, close to nature and explore particular natural settings assigned to every two groups.

- *First phase*: each group has to describe in 3-4 sentences the ecological community they observe assuming that certain organisms might be present. Each group describes the depicted or imaginary interactions that are occurring (20 mins).
- *Second phase*: participants write down certain aspects observed or imagined in terms of value to them. In specific, each group has to find X ways in which their healthy ecosystem benefits them (eg. food, clothing, health, transportation etc.). It might be easy to think about essential parts of personal lifestyles to generate some ideas (20 mins).
- *Third phase*: each group tries to categorize the X ideas into provisioning, regulating, supporting or cultural services (20 mins).

Each group should present to the rest of the groups their findings (30 mins). The facilitator should pay attention to the presentation, observing if the groups of similar ecosystems present different things. It is very likely that participants will identify different services, especially cultural and indirect services for the same ecosystem.

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Economic Valuation

Using the results of Activity 3.1 and Activity 3.2, the facilitator may present the concept of economic valuation and the notions of use and non-use values. This depends on the level of knowledge of the facilitator and the analytical skills of the participants.

Use values are referred to the values assigned by people to economic goods that are using directly (eg. food prices). Non-use values are referred to the values assigned even if they never have and never will directly use it (eg. the value of enjoying the view of the sea).

Mainstream economists apply economic valuation methods to estimate both types of values to design economic policies. The facilitator may provide articles and academic papers to the participants, according to their experience, on critics to economic valuation methods. Participants may explore the strong and weak points of assigning and estimating values based on how much a service is worth to humans.